

EXHIBIT 63

'A PERFECT STORM'

All of Columbia's NIH Funding Is Apparently Frozen. Here's What That Looks Like for One Researcher.

By [Maddie Khaw](#) April 11, 2025



M. SCOTT BRAUER FOR THE CHRONICLE

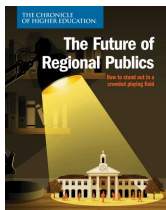
When Donna Farber saw [a Science article](#) on Wednesday reporting that Columbia University's National Institutes of Health grants had been frozen, it confirmed what she

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already knew. But Farber, a professor of microbiology and immunology at Columbia, was still shaken.

In an interview after the news broke, Farber said there was little clarity for researchers on how to move forward. She's wondering if she'll have the money to order more reagents for lab tests, to keep her grad students on payroll, and to obtain the cell-tissue samples she studies.

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According to *Science*, an NIH director sent an email to staffers last Tuesday instructing them not to award any new grants to Columbia until a restriction is lifted. Principal investigators reportedly can't draw down on existing grants, either, unless they get approval from the agency.

Farber is far from alone in facing funding woes. Many researchers nationwide have permanently lost their grants as the NIH under President Trump takes a sledgehammer to projects it deems “[no longer effectuate agency priorities](#),” such as those focused on topics like [LGBTQ+ health](#), minority populations, and Covid-19. Projects that are not political targets have also become [collateral damage](#). Many of Farber's Columbia colleagues have already lost grants for good, amid Trump's [cancellation of \\$400 million](#) in federal funding to the institution last month.

But Farber's situation illustrates a unique experience amid the broader storm: what it's like to try to keep a federally funded lab afloat when your institution has seemingly been singled out by the government as Public Enemy No. 1.

The Trump administration's mass withdrawal of funding to Columbia last month included awards from the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the NIH. That kicked off a campaign to enact similar freezes and reviews of funding to numerous other universities, including most of the Ivy League and Northwestern University. At nearly all of those institutions, the government has argued that punishment is warranted because campus officials haven't done enough to combat antisemitism.

[Columbia acquiesced](#) to a laundry list of demands from the administration in an attempt to win back that funding. Now apparently the university's entire NIH budget is on ice.

Columbia has still not received notice from the NIH about an across-the-board funding pause, a university spokesperson wrote in an email to *The Chronicle*: "The university remains in active dialogue with the federal government to restore its critical research funding."

When reached by *The Chronicle*, an NIH official did not confirm whether it had paused all grants. "NIH is taking action to review and, in some cases freeze or terminate, research funding that is not aligned with NIH and HHS priorities," the statement said. "We remain dedicated to restoring our agency to its tradition of upholding gold-standard, evidence-based science."

Difficult Decisions

Farber's work relies almost entirely on grants from the NIH, which pays for researchers' wages, equipment, and keeping the lights on in their labs.

Farber recently applied for a noncompetitive renewal of the largest grant she receives, which funnels \$2.3 million a year to her research on immune cells in human tissue. This would have been the ninth year in a row that Farber received this particular grant, through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. It funds the most expensive and essential parts of her lab's work, along with nine other investigators working on the same program in other labs.

For Farber, that money covers the salaries of some of her grad students and postdocs, as well as the costs of acquiring tissue samples and running sophisticated tests on those samples.

NIH grants are often awarded in five-year cycles, but investigators must submit progress reports to unlock funding each year. Farber submitted her report in January, as she has the past nine years. Typically, she'd hear back by February that the award was approved, then receive funding by early March.

This year, the money was more than a month late when Farber began to inquire.

Last week, Farber heard during a phone call with an “undisclosed source” that the NIH won't award grants to Columbia, she said. That broader freeze was confirmed by the *Science* article, which is how most Columbia researchers learned their grants were stalled. Columbia received about \$690 million from the NIH in 2024, according to *Science*.

“Every time you think your head is a little bit more above water, another wave comes to push you down. It's not sustainable.”

Usually, Farber said, her lab obtains new tissue samples each week from organ donors. But after that phone call last week, Farber pressed pause. She will now have to make difficult decisions about how to proceed.

“It's a bit of a gamble right now,” she said. Should she continue normal operations with the hope and assumption that funding will materialize eventually, or slim down on spending — thus delaying her lab's progress — for fear that the grant might never come?

“[The grant is] still on the books, but it has to be released,” Farber said. “There's just many ways that I guess you don't fund something — cancel it, freeze it, never fund it. So is this just one of the different ways that they're just not going to fund things?”

This time last year, Farber had 26 people in her lab. She's now down to 15. By June, that number will be 10. She's had to terminate some employees and not renew others, and she won't be able to replace graduate students who are moving on.

Disruption and Destruction

For Farber, the trouble started in December, when the Department of Defense terminated a different, vaccine-related grant, she said. She laid off some staff, couldn't fill vacant positions, and scrambled to move funds around.

By the time the Trump administration in March announced its first wave of funding cancellations at Columbia, slashing the training grants that fund the wages of some of the students and postdocs in her lab, her funds were already spread thin. She had to scrounge up additional money from other grants to cover those workers' salaries for the remaining months in their contracts. She let some of them know those contracts would not be renewed.

The news this week of the sweeping grant pauses and the administration's [plans to try to put Columbia under federal oversight](#) was another one-two punch, Farber said. She's worried she might not be able to stretch funds for much longer. She doesn't know if she can even spend on existing grant accounts.

"You can maybe handle one disruption or another disruption," Farber said. "It's become a perfect storm. Every time you think your head is a little bit more above water, another wave comes to push you down. It's not sustainable."

Farber has applied for other NIH grants, but now, everything is uncertain, including her own salary.

"Will they even review grants from Columbia?" she said. "Even if they review them and they get a fundable score, will they fund them? How long will this last? Where are we headed? We don't know."

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She could try to apply for more funding from private foundations, she said, but that wouldn't come close to matching what public grants have covered since she started running her lab in 1996. "There's no other way," she said. "Nothing is like NIH."

Farber said Columbia leadership has not communicated with research professors on what comes next.

"But the only thing is, I don't know what they want in the end, except to destroy us," she said of the federal government. "That's the problem."

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